

Local Government and Educational Leadership: A SWOT Approach to Sub-District Educational Management in Manado City

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ABSTRACT

This study applies a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) framework to examine educational management at the sub-district (kecamatan) level in Manado City, Indonesia. Drawing on qualitative and secondary data—including local governance performance reviews, regional public service effectiveness studies, and analyses of educational financing—this paper identifies internal and external factors shaping sub-district educational leadership. Strengths include clear governance mandates and established community collaboration norms; weaknesses involve limited budgetary autonomy, infrastructure gaps, and uneven leadership capacity; opportunities stem from national reform initiatives and participatory budgeting; threats arise from fiscal constraints and political volatility. Based on these findings, the paper recommends targeted capacity-building, enhanced budget flexibility, and formalized stakeholder engagement to improve sub-district educational outcomes.

Keywords: Educational Leadership, Educational Management, Manado City, SWOT

INTRODUCTION

Decentralization reforms in Indonesia have shifted significant authority for basic education from the central government to subnational entities, including districts and sub-districts, intending to improve service delivery and responsiveness to local needs. Manado City, as the capital of North Sulawesi Province, is organized into multiple kecamatan (sub-districts), each tasked with coordinating education services under the supervision of the Dinas Pendidikan Kota Manado (Manado City Education Office). However, wide variations in sub-district capacity, resource allocation, and leadership practices have led to uneven educational performance across neighborhoods.

Effective sub-district educational management is critical because kecamatan offices serve as the frontline between schools, communities, and the municipal government. They liaise with school principals, oversee curriculum implementation, coordinate teacher professional development, and facilitate infrastructure maintenance. Yet, studies show that the sub-district level often struggles with limited human resources, rigid budget structures dominated by civil-servant salaries, and insufficient monitoring mechanisms. A recent public service effectiveness study in North Sulawesi highlighted that administrative bottlenecks and unclear procedures delay key processes such as teacher salary disbursement and facility upgrades, undermining community trust.

This paper employs a SWOT approach to systematically identify the internal strengths and weaknesses of sub-district educational management in Manado City, as well as external opportunities and threats arising from policy, fiscal, and socio-cultural contexts. By triangulating insights from World Bank expenditure reviews, academic studies on local educational innovations, organizational leadership research, and recent reform initiatives, we aim to provide actionable recommendations for enhancing sub-district educational leadership.

A comprehensive SWOT analysis of sub-district educational management in Manado City reveals that while strong governance frameworks, community engagement norms, and institutionalized leadership practices underpin service delivery, capacity constraints at the sub-district level, especially in budgeting, infrastructure, and human resources, limit effectiveness. Opportunities lie in leveraging national reform programs (e.g., free school meals), participatory budgeting, and targeted capacity building, while threats include fiscal rigidities dominated by salary spending, political shifts affecting funding, and uneven digital adoption across sub-districts. Strengthening sub-district leadership through professional development, clarifying budget flexibility, and institutionalizing feedback loops can enhance educational management performance at the local level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Decentralized Education Governance in Indonesia

Since the early 2000s, Indonesia has progressively decentralized education management to subnational governments. The World Bank notes that higher standards of local governance correlate

with better education performance, as measured by budget allocation and execution capacity. Despite a constitutional mandate requiring at least 20% of district-city budgets to go toward education, many local governments fall short, and even those meeting the threshold often lack execution capacity due to rigid salary commitments.

In “The World Bank and Education Governance in Indonesia,” Edwards Jr. and Storen (2023) chronicle how school-based management (SBM) was institutionalized as a technical mechanism to increase accountability and efficiency at local levels, emphasizing community involvement and principal autonomy. However, the impact of these reforms has been mixed, with sub-district offices often lacking the capacity to support SBM processes effectively.

Public Service Effectiveness and Sub-District Roles

Rantung et al. (2024) examined the North Sulawesi Provincial Education Office and found significant discrepancies between standard procedures and field practices, leading to slow service processes, unclear information, and infrastructure deficiencies. Their findings underscore the importance of not only well-designed regulations but also competent subnational implementers capable of upholding service standards.

A study on Tomohon City, a neighboring municipality, highlighted the benefits of “Complete Staff Work” methods for sub-district heads, showing that structured decision protocols and supervisory routines improve administrative coherence and stakeholder satisfaction at the kecamatan level.

Sociocultural Context and Community Engagement

Nihayah, Revina, and Usman (2019) explored sociocultural drivers of local educational innovations in Indonesia, identifying trust norms, collaboration traditions, and participatory practices as key factors enabling or constraining innovation at district and sub-district levels. Manado, strong norms of community participation, often organized through Musrenbang (development planning meetings), provide a foundation for stakeholder engagement in educational planning.

Human Resource and Leadership Capacity

Research on educator human resource development in Ternate City highlights that capacity-building programs tailored to individual needs can stimulate teacher quality and problem-solving at the school level, but sub-district offices must coordinate these programs effectively to realize their benefits.

SWOT in Educational Contexts

Several studies have used SWOT to analyze specific educational contexts in Indonesia. For example, LPPM Unmer (2019) demonstrates how identifying internal and external factors can guide strategic planning in higher education institutions. Eduline (2023) applied SWOT to assess education financing impacts on school quality, revealing that government funding policies present both strengths (resource availability) and threats (policy uncertainty), and Bio-Conferences (2024) used SWOT to

examine educational facilities and infrastructure in Malang, emphasizing the need for strategic facility upgrades. Collectively, these studies validate SWOT as a useful tool for sub-district educational management analysis.

METHOD

This paper synthesizes findings from multiple sources to construct a comprehensive SWOT analysis. We reviewed:

- 1) Secondary data from the World Bank's Subnational Education Public Expenditure Review (2020) to understand fiscal patterns and governance correlations.
- 2) Qualitative research on public service effectiveness in North Sulawesi Province (Rantung et al., 2024).
- 3) Academic working papers on sociocultural innovation drivers (Nihayah et al., 2019).
- 4) Case studies of sub-district leadership practices in Tomohon City (Implementation and Relationship of Complete Staff Work Methods, 2020).
- 5) SWOT analyses in related educational contexts (LPPM Unmer, 2019; Eduline, 2023; Bio-Conferences, 2024; IJRR, 2019)
- 6) Policy reviews on the roles of central and regional governments in basic education (Ngan, 2023).

We mapped recurring themes onto the SWOT framework, identifying key internal (Strengths, Weaknesses) and external (Opportunities, Threats) factors specific to sub-district educational management in Manado.

Strengths

- 1) Clear governance mandates and legal frameworks.
Sub-district offices operate under established decentralization policies that define roles in planning, supervision, and coordination of education services.
- 2) Community participation norms.
Frequent Musrenbang meetings institutionalize community input into education planning at the sub-district level, leveraging social trust and collaborative traditions identified by Nihayah et al.
- 3) School-based management foundations.
National insistence on SBM since the late 1990s has equipped sub-district offices with templates for delegating autonomy to principals, fostering localized decision-making.
- 4) Existing capacity-building programs.
Educator development initiatives, though variably implemented, provide a base for expanding sub-district leadership training and technical skills.

Weaknesses

- 1) Limited budget flexibility.
Over 70% of district/city education budgets are consumed by civil servant salaries, leaving minimal discretionary funds for sub-district initiatives or infrastructure projects.
- 2) Inadequate infrastructure and facilities.
Provincial studies report scattered files, slow computer systems, and insufficient service spaces in regional offices, reflecting similar conditions at sub-district offices.
- 3) Uneven leadership capacity.
Sub-district heads often lack structured professional training in educational leadership, resulting in inconsistent application of Complete Staff Work protocols and supervision routines.
- 4) Bureaucratic bottlenecks.
Discrepancies between written procedures and field practices cause delays in approvals (e.g., teacher salary letters), undermining community trust.

Opportunities

- 1) National reform programs.
The government's USD 28 billion free school meals initiative aims to improve child nutrition and may channel additional resources and attention to kecamatan offices.
- 2) Participatory budgeting.
Emerging models of participatory budgeting empower sub-district communities to influence resource allocation, potentially overcoming rigid fiscal structures.
- 3) Digital transformation.
Integrated education data management systems and big-data analytics promise stronger monitoring of sub-district expenditures and outcomes, as recommended by the World Bank review.
- 4) Targeted capacity building.
Tailored training for sub-district heads on strategic planning and stakeholder engagement can draw on best practices from Ternate City and other reform pilots.

Threats

- 1) Fiscal constraints and policy uncertainty.
Government policy shifts, such as budget cuts for higher education, can provoke student protests and undermine sub-district morale, as seen in the "Dark Indonesia" movement
- 2) Political interference.
Local election cycles and shifting political priorities can reallocate funds away from sub-district education management, disrupting long-term planning.

3) Unequal digital access.

Variations in internet connectivity across Manado's sub-districts threaten the equitable implementation of e-reporting and online training programs.

4) External competition for resources.

Sub-district offices compete with other municipal services (e.g., health, infrastructure) for limited budget allocations, limiting investment in education initiatives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The SWOT analysis underscores that while strong legal frameworks and community engagement norms offer a foundation for sub-district educational management, practical weaknesses in budget flexibility, infrastructure, and leadership capacity hinder performance. Opportunities such as free meals programs and participatory budgeting can catalyze improvements, but threats from fiscal rigidity and political volatility must be managed.

To translate strengths into sustained performance, sub-district offices should:

- Institutionalize leadership development. Drawing on Tomohon's Complete Staff Work model, kecamatan heads can adopt structured decision protocols and peer-learning networks
- Pursue budget rebalancing. Advocate for a portion of non-salary funds to be allocated at the sub-district level for flexible educational initiatives, leveraging World Bank recommendations to standardize budget classifications.
- Enhance infrastructure incrementally. Use participatory budgeting to fund prioritized facility upgrades, such as digital classrooms, to bridge connectivity gaps.
- Embed monitoring and feedback loops. Implement integrated data systems as per the World Bank review and link them to public dashboards to promote transparency and accountability.

By addressing weaknesses and threats through targeted capacity-building and financial reforms, Manado City's sub-district educational management can more fully leverage its inherent strengths and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

CONCLUSION

A SWOT approach reveals that sub-district educational management in Manado City possesses robust governance mandates and community engagement traditions but faces significant constraints in fiscal autonomy, infrastructure, and leadership capacity. National reforms, such as the free meals program and participatory budgeting, offer promising avenues for resource mobilization and

stakeholder empowerment. However, threats from rigid salary spending, political shifts, and digital divides must be proactively managed. Strengthening sub-district leadership through structured training, expanding budget flexibility, and institutionalizing data-driven monitoring can enhance educational outcomes and equity across Manado's neighborhoods.

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